

Brushy Creek Rec. Area Trail Advisory Board Annual Meeting
Brushy Creek Park Office
October 14, 2003 P.M.

No tour was scheduled for this meeting

Meeting 6pm

Chairperson Ruth Nelleson called the meeting to order. Greg Van Fosson welcomed everyone and introduced our new Park Manager, Amber O'Neill. After the welcome and introduction Ruth asked for approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Chad Kelchen motioned to approve the minutes and Blake Parker seconded. After the approval of the minutes Ruth moved to old business.

Ruth asked about the progress of the adopt a trail program. Chad responded that there has been no progress since the last meeting. Kristi Schaaf mentioned that ITRA was having their next meeting on Nov. 1 and hoped to set a volunteer date at that time. Discussion followed on how to get more information out about the program in the hope of generating more interest.

Donna Christiansen revisited the topic of a possible trail crossing near the entrance of the south campground. She asked if any progress had been made towards securing grants for the project. Chad brought up the fact that an "at grade" crossing would be unacceptable. Greg stated that this is a county issue, as this is county property, and that board members must gain the permission of the county for a below grade crossing. Greg stated that several years ago the board, the county, and the DNR agreed to construct the trail crossing beneath the bridge on D-46 because of the obvious problems associated with the south equine campground entrance. Ruth mentioned that she is content with the current crossing underneath the bridge on D-46.

Chad gave an overview of the summer. He mentioned that with the addition of another Park Manager, as well as, two additional seasonal aides this past year had helped in getting other projects done around the area, including the completion of the lake trail and the new mapping system. Chad also handed out the new trail/lake map for everyone to review. Messenger Printing produced this new brochure. Copies are available in brochure racks and at the park office. Chad also had a new copy of the trail map with numbers, which correspond with numbered posts along the trail. He explained that the new map would be on the park's website soon and that it would appear on the new brochure next year. Chad also went on to say that this was the busiest summer yet for the park. Camping is up 35% over the previous year. Labor Day weekend was the largest ever. Both campgrounds were full to capacity plus an additional 50-60 sites in the overflow areas in the north. Chad went on to say that this would be the last year for the overflow area. The extra load resulting from the overflow camping units on the sewer

system was too great, nearly causing it to fail. Greg noted that the overflow area was a temporary addition to the park until the south campground had been completed. It is expected that with the completion of the 35 non-electric sites in the south equestrian campground and the opening of the new non-equestrian campground that overflow camping will not be required. Mike Tinkham asked how many non-equestrians used the equestrian facilities. Chad and Amber both said that the number of non-equestrians using the equine campgrounds was very low and that most were camping with or associated with equestrian campers. Some discussion followed about the need for equestrian sites around the state and the current situation at Elk Rock State Park. Amber and Chad again reminded the board that a total of 83 additional campsites would be added next year.

Discussion shifted to the future of camping and facilities at Brushy Creek. Greg brought the board up to date on construction projects and future ideas for the parks. One of these was the implementation of a reservation system. According to Greg a reservation system is being considered and possibly be ready for implementation in the near future. He also noted that the construction of the non-equestrian campground was nearing completion. This campground would have 48 sites with 8 full-hookup sites included; also there will be an additional 35 non-electric sites in the south equestrian campground added this next year. Donna asked if they would be completed by next Memorial Day. Greg said probably not; however, staff will do there very best to complete them as soon as possible. The board then started talking about volunteering time to help complete the additional sites. Table materials and grills have been ordered for the new sites. Cabins were the next item of discussion. A number of cabins will be built at Brushy Creek in the near future. The first of these will be camper cabins, which are seasonal one-room cabins with heat and air conditioning and will be constructed near or in the existing campgrounds so as to utilize the shower and restroom facilities. Year-round cabins will be built at a later date. The construction of cabins could happen within 1-3 years depending on funding. Brushy Creek could see a beach/concession facility in the next 1-3 years.

Under new business, Ruth asked for a call chain to generate volunteers for assembling picnic tables and hitch rails in the spring. Also discussed was the placement of a donation box at the north equestrian campground. Pat Reed suggested contacting the Friends of Brushy Creek as the collector and depository of these funds. This money would be for the benefit of the trail system and park. Linda Jenny volunteered to help collect the donations if needed. Pat was going to check with the Friends of Brushy Creek to see if they were interested.

Linda Jenny asked if there was a way to make the trailhead signage more visible in the campgrounds. She noted that she had spoken to several people who had difficulty finding them in the campgrounds. She suggested moving the trailhead signs more toward the road. Chad said he would look into it.

It was also noted that there was a need for more signage around the park to help people find their way. Greg said that we would work with the county to address this issue.

It was asked if the DNR was going to implement a state park user fee. Greg stated that the DNR was not considering one at this time, but was proceeding towards developing a reservation system for the Iowa State Park System.

Donna noted the recent planting of trees along the west side of the main trail south of the north equestrian campground. She requested more trees for the east side of that field. Chad noted that the field has been planted to a variety of native grasses and flowers and that it would take a year or two before they developed fully. The trees on the east side would block out the prairie and would be put in jeopardy from fire when prairie burns were conducted. Greg explained to the board that Brushy Creek is now a local ecotype seed source for prairies across the northern 1/3 of the state.

Ruth mentioned that the approaches to the trail bridges are getting very narrow and asked if something was being done about it. Greg said that we are aware of the problem and are going out for bids soon to hire a contractor to repair the problem.

Blake Parker asked about the possibility of grooming trails for cross-country skiing this winter. Chad stated that the park doesn't have the necessary equipment to perform this task.

Pat Reed asked how the latest 2.5% roll back in general fund spending was going to affect the park. It was noted that now that the DNR was a Charter Agency, we would be exempt from any general fund reductions for the next 5 years.

Donna asked about the construction of a new trail west of the south day use area in an effort to avoid riding the road. Greg stated that we would follow the trail rules in gaining access to this area. One of first steps in this process is an archeological study. These studies can be slow and expensive, but are required before any additional trail development can begin. Greg suggested that staff concentrate on completing the additional campsites for the south equine campground, and in the meantime he would start checking into archaeological studies for the area in question.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 13. A tour will be held at 4pm followed by the 6pm meeting. The tour and meeting will start and be conducted at the park office/maintenance complex.